



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 20, 1999

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OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN FLOYD SPENCE

FULL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION – 106TH CONGRESS

I want to welcome everybody “back to the future,” to the new (but old) Armed Services Committee. As the saying goes...its good to be back!

As I indicated, we meet today to consider and adopt three resolutions pertaining to the committee rules, oversight plan and staff. Any other business will be considered at another time.

Let me start by indicating the need for us to move through our business this morning as quickly as possible since we have a busy day ahead. Immediately following this meeting, Republican members will meet upstairs in room 2212 to select their subcommittee assignments, followed at 12 noon by Democrat members. And starting at 1:00 pm this afternoon back here in this room, we will have an important hearing with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the state of our military forces. According, I urge all members to help expedite our business this morning.

I want to extend a particular welcome to those members who will be serving on the committee for the first time. In a few minutes, Mr. Skelton and I will each take a brief moment to introduce our new members who are here so everyone can begin to associate a name with a face.

It is not news that our military is confronting the most serious challenges it has faced since the hollow military days of the post-Vietnam era. The force has shrunk too fast and too far, as have the budgetary resources necessary to sustain and modernize these forces. The result has been a series of worsening readiness, quality of life and modernization problems, and resource shortfalls. As many of you have heard me say before, I have never been more concerned about the state of our military forces than I am today.

The work that this committee does is important – and in my opinion, has never been more important than it is today. We address issues integral to our nation’s current and future security. To the extent that we succeed, the credit belongs to the returning members sitting here today. While there is rarely complete agreement amongst ourselves (which is probably true with any group of 60 individuals!), everyone on this committee works hard and approaches his or her assignment in a bipartisan fashion, and with the appropriate sense of responsibility and seriousness that Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution demands.

The annual defense authorization bill requires more bipartisanship and teamwork than any other legislation the House considers during the year. So let me thank all members, in advance, for their support, their cooperation and of course, their patience. My door is always open and I look forward to working with each and every one of you as we try to keep our commitment to the nation and, in particular, our commitment to the men and women who wear the uniform.

So, welcome to all. We have a lot of work to do and a busy year ahead.